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AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

VOLUME 4 SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, SEPTEMBER, 1922 NUMBER 9

SEPTEMBER MEETING: The next regular meeting of the Association will be held on Thursday evening, 14th inst., at eight o'clock, in the Assembly Hall of the Public Library, corner McAllister and Larkin Streets. Take elevator to third floor. Car lines No. 5 or No. 19.

The feature of the evening will consist of "Motion Pictures of some Southern California Birds," by Dr. G. Dallas Hanna, Curator of Invertebrate Paleontology of the California Academy of Sciences, who will exhibit and explain the same. Visitors will be welcome.

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SEPTEMBER FIELD TRIP will be taken on Sunday, September 17th, to Baumberg station, a short distance below Mt. Eden, on the east shore of San Francisco Bay, for the purpose of observing waders and shore birds. The partieular attraction here lies in the fact that avocets and stilts are found in this locality.

Take Southern Pacific ferry leaving San Francisco at 8:20 a. m. East Bay members may take the train at First Street and Broadway, Oakland, at 8:55 a. m. Fare 84 cents each way from San Francisco or 66 cents from Oakland. Return train leaves Baumberg at 4:35 p. m., reaching San Francisco at 5:50 p. m. Bring lunch and water.

The club house at Baumberg may be reached by automobile via the highway from San Lorenzo to Mt. Eden and Alvarado, turning off toward the bay about three-quarters of a mile below Mt. Eden four corners. Or, otherwise, from car line at Haywards, via the road to Mt. Eden and thence as above.

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE AUGUST MEETING: The sixty seventh regular meeting of the Association was held on August 10th, in the Assembly Hall of the San Francisco Public Library, with President Kibbe in the chair; Mrs. C. R. Smith, Secretary *pro tem*; seventeen members and six guests in attendance.

Mr. Clark Blickensderfer, of Estes Park, Colo., described his work in bird photography and exhibited a large number of exceptional photographs, the fruits of many painstaking efforts and devices of various sorts. Notable examples may be cited as follows: Rocky Mountain and Long-crested Jays, attracted by baiting, with eight exposures of the latter and twenty three of the former, before satisfactory results were obtained; Clarke Crow and Broad-tailed Hummingbird; Avocet, caught by stalking; House-wren and nest; a very remarkable set of views of a Saw-whet Owl, nest and family; various views of a Great Horned Owl, which had built its nest in one formerly constructed by a magpie; Long-eared Owl and Screech Owl; Spotted Sandpiper; Williamson Sapsuckers, male and female; Red-naped Sapsucker; Ptarmigan in both winter and spring plumage. The photographs of the

avocet and owls were obtained on the plains around Denver, and the others in Estes Park.

After enjoying this treat, the meeting enthusiastically expressed its appreciation to Mr. Blickensderfer.

Calls were then made for vacation reports, and Misses King and Griffin responded with brief accounts of their observations in and about the Grand Canyon of Arizona. Mrs. Reygadas described her experiences on the 1922 High Trip of the Sierra Club in the Kings-Kaweah country and Mr. Smith contributed notes gathered during the season in his wanderings about the State.

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THE 1922 TRIP TO THE FARALLONES

Through the kindly co-operation of Capt. H. W. Rhodes, Superintendent of Lighthouses, Eighteenth District, the Association has once more been permitted to visit this fascinating locality. Those of us who were fortunate enough to participate, sympathized most sincerely with those whose absence or business engagements prevented them from attending what can best be described as a classical event in the history of a bird-loving organization.

Promptly at seven o'clock, Friday morning, August eighteenth, the party assembled at Pier 15, San Francisco, boarded the Lighthouse Tender *Madrono* and was forthwith made to feel at home by Capt. Warriner and everyone of the other officers and crew.

The roster included Mesdemoiselles Ames, Baily, Helen Burroughs, Olive Burroughs, Fritts, Griffin, King, Pierce, Schroder and Margaret Wythe; Mesdames Kibbe, Reygadas, E. D. Roe and Thomas; Past Honorary Presidents Dr. B. W. Evermann and H. S. Swarth; Messrs. Joseph Dixon, Kibbe, More, Rapp, Smith, Tracy I. Storer and Thomas. Twenty three in all.

The sun shone brightly as we passed out through the Gate, meeting the Pacific Mail liner President Wilson on her way in. Here and there a bird was encountered; a murre or two, some phalaropes, pelicans; now and again a cormorant would overtake and pass us, swiftly winging his flight to the common destination. We were escorted most of the time by western gulls who would take turns bossing the job from the trucks. A whistling buoy rode with us on the main deck, forward, but none could hear him. A school of large porpoises, vastly excited, came hurtling athwart our course from the north, then wheeled and traveled with us for a time. Now the sun was obscured by a light fog which prevailed almost to the islands.

At the lightship we loitered an hour while delivering water and other supplies. A lone Pacific fulmar was drifting about, sampling what the gods provided with the air of a *gourmet*. A pilot schooner tacked back and forth on its endless quest. The rest of the world seemed very far away.

Resuming our course soon after ten o'clock, the passing show abated somewhat, and the wind became quite brisk. Some betook themselves to the after cabin to see whether it felt different down there. One to whom fear was stranger, lost his color and tried to see whether it had fallen overboard. Another disposed himself along the gunwale and endeavored to remember why he had come aboard. Not long after eleven, the Farallon light, 350 feet above the sea, was descried and at noon we were anchored in Fisherman's Bay.

The landing was effected smoothly, the ladies being dropped into the small boat in a chair by a hand tackle, and when shore was reached, all one had to do was to keep his feet out of trouble and step off the boat at the top of its rise.

The party then scattered somewhat and for four glorious hours scoured the island, trying in that time to accomplish what would require a week, and

a busy one at that. Dr. Evermann and Mr. Swarth sought relics of the fur seals which once throve on the islands. Two boxes of bones from an excavation were the fruits of their efforts and these will be submitted to a careful examination and identification. Mr. Storer and others endeavored to unearth specimens of the salamanders known locally as night lizards, but, instead, brought forth a baby Cassin auklet from one of the innumerable burrows, to which it was restored after having its picture taken. Others witnessed the bringing in of two whales by a little steam whaler, which seemed to be dominated by its enormous prey, lashed alongside. The rabbits were very numerous and much more in evidence than in 1917.

The rock wrens were strikingly abundant and apparently more numerous than in 1917. As then, no live Baird cormorants nor petrels were observed, but Miss Pierce found an ashy petrel, recently dead, and thus afforded us an opportunity of becoming acquainted with this pretty little bird. The Cassin auklets were seen in numbers in the water near the landing. The puffins and guillemots flew hither and yon as usual. The Brandt cormorant colonies were well populated and there was a measure of Farallon cormorants. Several black turnstones were found along the northerly shore and one ruddy turnstone was observed by Mr. Swarth, who also reported a western savannah sparrow. Several wandering tattlers were seen and the English sparrows are holding forth around the dwellings.

The serious phase of our visit lies in the relations between the western gulls and the murres. It goes without saying that no census could be attempted, and even had this been possible, the proper time had passed, but those who had visited the islands in 1917 have brought away a very definite conception that the murres are distinctly fewer in proportion and the western gulls more numerous, relatively, than on the occasion of our previous visit. This is a matter which deserves prompt and serious investigation and consideration. The systematic preying of the western gulls upon the eggs and young of the murres and cormorants is notorious. For some reason, the cormorants seem better able to hold their own. Time will be required to establish the facts, and before it is too late, the propriety and feasibility of protecting and preserving the murres should be determined and appropriate action taken. The gulls are fully able to take care of themselves, at the expense of these other unobtrusive species. Are we in danger of losing the murres? If so, can we afford to lose them? If they are diminishing, and we wish to preserve them, how can this best be accomplished?

During our rambling on the island, the Madrono has made a trip to the northwesterly end of the group and has planted the buoy off Noon-day Rock, and has raised and brought back its predecessor and shortly after four o'clock her whistle is heard. Reluctantly we heed the summons, return to the landing, scramble down and fall into the boat, call the roll, scramble up the accommodation ladder, and wave good-bye. Even the anchor has caught our infection and it hates to let go of the island, but the Captain and the capstan overcome its recalcitrance and we are homeward bound.

After leaving the island, we encountered a considerable flock of shearwaters, flying westward at some distance. Arguing from the amount of white exhibited by these birds, Mr. Swarth concluded that there was among them a large proportion of the black-vented species.

The steamer again traversed the fog belt, finding it somewhat heavier than in the morning. The return trip was broken only by a brief halt at the lightship to take aboard some pilots and service men. Venus, Jupiter and Mars blink benignly upon us from astern. Alcatraz beckons us on, between Bonita and Mile-rock, between Lime Point and Fort Scott. We circle around the red beacon on Meiggs Wharf and make our pier about eight o'clock, a little wiser and very much happier for the experiences of the day, and with

everyone grateful to the Department of Commerce and to Superintendent Rhodes and to Captain Warriner for their several contributions to the successful outcome of our second visit to the rocky outpost which marks our famous Bay and guides our commerce safely into it.

A. S. KIBBE.

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AUGUST FIELD TRIP was taken on Sunday, the 13th, to Point Bonita and Rodeo Lagoon. Reaching Sausalito on the 8:15 ferry from San Francisco, we walked along the highway to Fort Baker, finding a flock of blue-gray gnatcatchers, (Event No. 1). Just as we started up a cut-off trail near the barracks, a western tanager flew across the path into some cypresses, (Event of the day No. 2). Passing Battery Spencer, we followed the highway to the saddle at the summit. As an adventure we took the trail from here, leading around the hill, several hundred feet above the bay, and we were well paid for we had a splendid view of San Francisco and the Golden Gate. The outlook, as we rounded the shoulder of the hill and saw Point Bonita, with its lighthouse and buildings and the Coast Guard and Signal Station, was grand. We became somewhat scattered in finding our way down to the ocean beach, but all finally assembled for lunch in a sheltered cove. Discussions of ocean and shore birds and vacation trips followed. About four o'clock we started for the lighthouse. The mysteries of the light and of the fog-horns were explained by the youthful son of one of the keepers. For a long time we watched the birds passing and repassing the point. It was just before leaving that we had the real thrill of the day. The pelicans with one accord started to fish, while the Heermann gulls followed them up and sought to rob them, while cormorants and murres and a lone surf scoter looked on. We all wanted to remain and watch the sunset, but Time and Tide (and Jitnies) wait for no man, so off we had to go.

Members present were: Misses Baily, Flynn, Fritts, King, Schroder, Sterne; Mesdames Kibbe, Reygadas and Thomas; Messrs. Kibbe, More, Rapp and Thomas. As guests, Mrs. Baily, Miss Werner and Master Jacobs. Thirteen members and three guests.

Birds encountered were: Murres, western, California and Heermann gulls; Farallon and Brandt cormorants, California brown pelican and surf scoter; quail, turkey vulture, red-tail and sparrow hawks; kingfisher, flicker, Anna and Allen hummers; horned lark, California jay, blackbird and meadowlark; linnet, green-backed goldfinch, lark sparrow, Nuttall sparrow and junco; San Francisco and California towhees, western tanager and shrike; Vigors wren, chickadee, bush-tit, wren-tit, and blue-gray gnatcatcher. Thirty four species.

C. R. THOMAS.

AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

FOR THE STUDY AND THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

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Meets second Thursday of each month, at 8:00 p.m., in Assembly Hall of San Francisco Public Library, Larkin and McAllister Streets.

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